



# Solidarity

For social ownership of the banks and industry

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[www.workersliberty.org](http://www.workersliberty.org)



## Euro-solidarity can beat Euro-cuts

See pages 5-8



## What is the Alliance for Workers' Liberty?

Today one class, the working class, lives by selling its labour power to another, the capitalist class, which owns the means of production. Society is shaped by the capitalists' relentless drive to increase their wealth. Capitalism causes poverty, unemployment, the blighting of lives by overwork, imperialism, the destruction of the environment and much else.

Against the accumulated wealth and power of the capitalists, the working class has one weapon: solidarity.



The Alliance for Workers' Liberty aims to build solidarity through struggle so that the working class can overthrow capitalism. We want socialist revolution: collective ownership of industry and services, workers' control and a democracy much fuller than the present system, with elected representatives recallable at any time and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

We fight for the labour movement to break with "social partnership" and assert working-class interests militantly against the bosses.

Our priority is to work in the workplaces and trade unions, supporting workers' struggles, producing workplace bulletins, helping organise rank-and-file groups.

We are also active among students and in many campaigns and alliances.

### We stand for:

- Independent working-class representation in politics.
- A workers' government, based on and accountable to the labour movement.
- A workers' charter of trade union rights — to organise, to strike, to picket effectively, and to take solidarity action.
- Taxation of the rich to fund decent public services, homes, education and jobs for all.
- A workers' movement that fights all forms of oppression. Full equality for women and social provision to free women from the burden of housework. Free abortion on request. Full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Black and white workers' unity against racism.
- Open borders.
- Global solidarity against global capital — workers everywhere have more in common with each other than with their capitalist or Stalinist rulers.
- Democracy at every level of society, from the smallest workplace or community to global social organisation.
- Working-class solidarity in international politics: equal rights for all nations, against imperialists and predators big and small.
- Maximum left unity in action, and openness in debate.
- If you agree with us, please take some copies of *Solidarity* to sell — and join us!

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# Irony knows no limits

By Vincent Jaques

**Manchester University's Free Speech and Secular Society were prevented from displaying *Charlie Hebdo* at their stall during a societies fair on 27 January.**

Irony knows no limits. A representative of the group said they wanted to print copies of the cover following the massacre in order to show support for the murdered journalists' right to free expression. They also stated that they did not necessarily agree with all the content of *Charlie Hebdo*, but wanted to defend the principle of freedom of publication.

Manchester Students' Union censored the maga-

zine on the grounds that the cover could be potentially offensive to Muslim students. The Union General Secretary, Charlie Cook, explained that the move was in line with their Safe Space policy, and defended it in terms of her responsibility to represent students of Muslim background.

The context here is a spiralling culture of bans in response to political issues in Students' Unions (various SUs have banned the SWP and *The Sun* etc.). But bans are both inadequate and dangerous as a response: the ban approach undermines political freedoms; and are a bureaucratic attempt to deal with issues which are inherently political.

Officers often cite the need to protect all students,

especially vulnerable minorities. Their approach is inconsistent — what about the offence caused by UKIP or the Conservatives? And, more importantly, this does little to challenge the causes of racism and sexism.

**We need to continue to develop a culture of militant feminist and anti-racist grassroots campaigning, while practising political freedom on our campuses.**



## Fracking U-turn

By Rachael Barnes

Pressure from constituents, which had the potential to cause a rebellion in Tory and Lib Dem MPs, has forced the government to accept Labour's amendments on fracking last week.

Protected areas, national parks and sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs) are now off-limits to fracking, but it is unclear to those in power how big an area of land that will include.

According to Greenpeace, only 3% of the 931 blocks of land licensed for fracking in the UK have no protected areas at all.

A Greenpeace spokesperson said, "Unless ministers can explain why fracking is too risky for the South Downs but perfectly safe in the Lancashire countryside, the next obvious step is to ban this controversial technique from the whole of the UK."

A proposal for a moratorium on fracking was defeated in the Commons, despite concluding that fracking "isn't in line with the UK's climate change targets".

**It is reported that the future for fracking in the UK looks "bleak".**

**Thousands took part in the March for Homes on Saturday 31 January. The two marches, from the East and South, converged on City Hall to call for rent controls, new council housing, a stop to social housing demolition and affordable secure housing for all.**



## £450K? No way!

By Beth Redmond

**Over the past month, a wave of actions have sprung up on university campuses across the UK, highlighting the pay gap between the highest and lowest paid staff on each campus.**

Groups of students worked out how many days into the year the highest paid (the vice chancellor) would earn the entire annual wage of the lowest paid worker, and organised protests and mock-parties to "celebrate" on that day. In

Birmingham, David Eastwood's pay exceeds an annual sum of £450,000, taking only thirteen days to earn what the lowest paid worker does in a year, on top of which the university also pays for his house and all of his travel expenses.

The idea originally came from a group of students from the University of Bath, in a bid to embarrass their Vice Chancellor and create a positive protest atmosphere in which to attract new activists.

The pay disparity outlined by the now national

protests was virtually unknown to the majority of people, and because of the outright lack of logic behind the difference in pay, students have been drawn in to the campaign.

**On many of these campuses, the lowest paid workers (often migrant cleaners) are on zero-hour contracts and are not even earning the living wage, so the idea that VCs can pay themselves so much and be deserved of a bonus on top of that would be hysterical if it wasn't so cruel.**



# The Pope, the Multitude, and the President

By Hugh Edwards

**The crisis in Italy's left and trade union forces has been revealed by the conversion of the leader of the metalworkers' union, Maurizio Landini to the ideas of Hardt and Negri.**

In an interview he calls into question the capacity of the workers' movement and the traditional tactic of the strike to address the issues characterising contemporary capitalism. He claims unions need to embrace the perspective of the "social strike" as the instrument for the voluntaristic mobilisation of the vast archipelago of persons now constituted by the new form of capitalist dominion — the multitude.

Of course, sadly, these ideas are not new in Italy, where they have long held sway among masses of the

student movements and in social centres in all the major cities.

That Landini seems to share these ideas is a worrying indication of disintegrating support for class struggle organisation, on the heels of so many setbacks and failures.

That the likes of Landini bear almost complete responsibility for the debacle of the largely symbolic resistance to the government. Landini, a one time member of the Stalinist Italian Communist Party, has ever been more than — at best, and for a period — a militant trade union leader on issues of wages and conditions.

Along with a scrum of worthy liberal academics and constitutionalists, he fronted the last year's farcical campaign to, as he put it, "implement the only revo-

lutionary document Italians need, namely the Italian constitution".

In the same interview he mentions he is now reading the latest book by the Pope — "the most left-wing analysis in the country".

Given that the pontiff has a 2000 year head start in matter of minting and offering to the masses pious abstractions, perhaps Landini can recruit him to the multitude.

With the stirring victory for Syriza on the 25 January and the 100,000-strong anti-austerity demonstration in Madrid on 31 January, socialists might have hoped, for similar in Italy.

It is, after all, second only to Greece in the parlous state of its public finances and the battering inflicted on its working people by pro-austerity governments.

All the more so having witnessed the joyful "bella ciao" greeting of 500 or so of the Italian left present in Athens to greet Tsipras's victory.

Alas, just as these events were taking place, the leaders of Italy's left "progressive" forces, inside and outside parliament were voting for, or celebrating the success of, Sergio Mattarella (Matteo Renzi's candidate), as the new president of the country. Sergio Mattarella is "a man noted for his love of social justice and the free-market".

This is but the latest in the left's shameful capitulation to Renzi. And they now find themselves the toast of the opinion-makers for their sense of responsibility in ensuring the smooth transition to institutional stability of Renzi's government. A gov-

ernment which, in its brief existence has, with the passing of the Jobs Act, inflicted the most profound political defeat on the trade union and working class movement.

Less than a fortnight ago, the same people, at the instigation of Nicky Vendola, governor of Puglia and leader of the Left, Ecology and Freedom party, had gathered in Milan for a convention titled The Human Factor. This was meant to "explore tentatively the possibility to create a new subject", i.e. a new party. Only the title distinguishes this three-day initiative from the countless other such exercises reconfiguring the forces that imploded after the defeat of the last Prodi-led government, in which leaders like Vendola or Paolo Ferrero of the now

shriveled, faction-ridden Communist Refoundation held ministerial office.

This latest attempt at an opportunist lash-up had little to do with what was unfolding in Greece, apart from the rhetoric. The leaders and the outfits they preside over have long abandoned any perspective of mass working-class led struggle as the key to social and political change.

They ignominiously failed to offer even token opposition to Renzi's Jobs Act. Rather than risk a government defeat in the Senate, and thus the possibility of an election, they abandoned the building before the vote on the Act.

**The Human Factor produced little and remains "work in progress" or another dead letter.**

## Solidarity with Kobane and Rojava

By Vicki Morris

**More than 80 people attended the "Solidarity with Kobane and Rojava" dayschool in Nottingham on 31 January.**

The event was organised by Nottingham Kurdish Solidarity Campaign and the Kurdish Society of Nottingham Trent University.

With the exception of a good contingent from the Alliance for Workers' Liberty, and Plan C and NCAFC members, the rest of the left was absent. Participants talked about the bad attitude that much of the left has to the Kurdish struggle. Too many think that the Kurds cease to deserve support if they accept, however critically, military support from the US or its allies.

Even worse is the belief of much of the left that to criticise ISIS is to shade into "Islamophobia" — hostility to Muslims per se. The conference was clear that the fight against ISIS is part of a broader and crucial fight against Islamist political movements.

Workshops covered: building solidarity and raising aid for the victims of ISIS; the origins of ISIS, and how to defeat it; Kurdish women's struggle; and the significance of the new constitutional forms in Rojava.

We talked about positive aspects of Rojava's "democratic confederalist" constitution.

In particular its secularism, and recognition of the different nationalities and ethnic groups in the area, but also how it is hard to take this as a model given the unusual situation in Rojava.

**AGRARIAN**  
**It is an economically backward, primarily agrarian region, where the voluntarist impulse is peculiarly strong while its people face annihilation.**

The drive to empower women is exemplary for this part of the world, and seems to be partially successful, not just a commitment on paper. Speaking about this, however, Zaher Baher said he didn't think that there was much independent feminist activity as such, and

noted that the drive for equality has come mainly from the PYD.

Questions raised included: how much political control does the PYD have over institutions inside Rojava; whether the forms of rule in Rojava really constitute the end of the state; what benefits accrue to office holders in Rojava and how do ordinary citizens control their representatives; is Rojava "post-capitalist" in any sense; who could defend the new democratic forms if the PYD/PKK turned its back on them (PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan is supposed to have taken his "democratic confederalist" turn in jail after reading the work of American anarchist-leftist Murray Bookchin)?

The idea for the dayschool grew out of protests organised in Nottingham in solidarity with Kobane when it was threatened by ISIS last year.

**It was a celebration of the liberation of Kobane; and a pledge to help Kurdish forces continue to push ISIS back further.**

• bit.ly/1HTrEXU

## Disband the spooks!

By Martin Thomas

**On 27 January Argentina's president, Cristina Fernandez, announced that she would disband the country's intelligence agency, its equivalent of MI5 or the FBI.**

With Fernandez, the move may be just because the agency had helped a prosecutor who accused Fernandez of covering up the 1994 bombing of a Jewish community centre in Buenos Aires that killed 85 people. She says she will set up a new agency.

The idea is good, though. We all want someone to keep an eye out for people who give signs that they may bomb or shoot up community centres, shops, or newspaper offices. But

that doesn't need to be done by a secretive agency outside democratic control.

In the 1970s Labour prime minister Harold Wilson suspected that MI5 was "bugging" his office. A book by a former MI5 agent published in 1987 (in Australia, because MI5 got it banned in Britain) confirmed the story. MI5 denies it, but MI5's official history admits that MI5 kept a file on Wilson.

A 2013 book reported how MI5 has operated surveillance on many people in literature and the arts, such as W H Auden, Ewan MacColl, Joan Littlewood, Arthur Koestler, George Orwell.

Since 2009 the Government has placed obligations on UK communication service providers to retain data

from *everyone* — whom we phone, text and email and much more — for 12 months. The Counter-Terrorism and Security Bill, which has gone through its stages in the Commons and is now at an advanced stage in the House of Lords, will increase surveillance powers even further.

The secret state apparatus allows for torture and mistreatment as well as surveillance.

On 30 January, Lawrence Wilkerson, former chief of staff to US Secretary of State Colin Powell, became the latest of a string of US officials to confirm that the CIA used a base in British-ruled Diego Garcia (Indian Ocean islands from which Britain evicted the entire population in 1968-73) for rendition and torture.

**Disband the spooks!**

### SHAHROKH AND REZA PETITION HAND-IN AND PROTEST

**Thursday Feb 11, 5:30 (for 6PM start)  
Iranian embassy  
16 Princes Gate  
London  
SW71PT**

**Please send in any remaining signatures.**

**Trade unionism should not be a crime**





# From the Lib-Dems to class politics

## How I became a socialist By Dan Rawnsley



**My first political memory is of the 1997 general election. I was nine and didn't understand what was going on. My dad was a vocal Tory supporter and all I knew was there had been a competition and "our" side had lost.**

My early political education came from my parents and the Church of England. I still find it odd that I became a socialist! But I became aware of contradictions in the world views I was being inculcated with.

The vicar put across a liberal "love and caring" interpretation of the Bible, but at home politics was more individualistic. My dad would often tell me and my brother "paddle your own canoe". Years later I would tell him that in this society we were all stuck in one canoe and fighting over the paddles.

Meanwhile at church the ideas about everyone being equal didn't square with the prayers about Christianity being the true faith. I stopped saying the bits I disagreed with and eventually got out of it altogether by playing rugby on Sundays. I felt bad about human suffering and wanted the world to be a better, happier place, but my views were largely directionless.

I went to gigs at an anarchist club in Bradford and started trying to read about anarchism online. I made friends with a group of people who read the newspapers and talked about the world. I didn't like the Labour Party because of the war in Iraq; I didn't like the Tories because they seemed mean. I



For a while they looked left wing...

liked the Liberal Democrats, who, at face value, seemed pleasant and left-wing.

I got involved in a youth organisation called the Woodcraft Folk and came into contact with a general left-wing culture, but our activity wasn't aimed at doing a great deal apart from organising our own events and educating our own members.

I thought I was intelligent (I did well at school) and left

wing. At university I was sure I would meet lots of other intelligent, left-wing people just like me, who would want to talk about anarchism and the Liberal Democrats. I went to Oxford University, met a lot of arrogant, rich conservatives, and got into Marxist literary theory. It was a period full of confusing revelations.

Around this time I went on an anti-war march and on the day hung around with an anarchist I'd met on the coach. But when he went looking for some anarchists who had boycotted the march and gone to the pub, that did it for me and anarchism.

Then I met the Alliance for Workers' Liberty and the Socialist Party and started hanging around with the SP in Oxford.

An AWL comrade from London would visit and talk to me. Socialist education was giving me ideas that helped me to understand the world. No one had ever really talked to me about class politics before. With the AWL I was reading and discussing, which gave me something to focus on and talk about. Soon I was asked if I wanted to join. I said yes, I couldn't think of a good reason not to. I agreed with everything I was learning; it made sense to act because of it.

Most of my political education has happened since joining the AWL. I would never have come across the struggles I've been involved in or the ideas I've read about without an organisation. I remain a socialist because of this ongoing education and the analysis of the world we share.

**I'm still where I was when I first joined. I still agree, so why would I not act?**

## Which omission?

### Letter



**From Duncan Morrison's previous letters, I can only guess at the omission which allegedly made Jon Lansman's article (*Solidarity* 343) "right-wing".**

It was either (a) that it failed to say that we should back a Labour leader contest anyway; (b) that it failed to say that the push by Blairite MPs to oust Ed Miliband proved that nothing can be done in the Labour Party; or (c) that it failed to criticise Miliband sufficiently.

Criticism (c) has some force, as I detailed earlier in this exchange. I covered criticism (a) in another previous response. On (b): no-one here disputes that things in the Labour Party are bad, but the ability of a group of Blairite MPs to get media attention is not all-decisive.

Further: (1) revolutionary papers should sometimes "decode" machinations even within the ruling class, let alone among Labour MPs. Not every article has to be a call to get out into the streets. For example, we censured the parliamentary coup which ousted Australian Labor Party leader Kevin Rudd in 2010 as a "right-wing shift", despite disliking Rudd.

(2) I didn't say that the MPs couldn't topple a leader. They could do that even if the Labour Party were much more democratic than it has ever been. They can't unilaterally decide the outcome of the ensuing leader election.

(3) Because of nomination thresholds, it is hard to run left leader challenges in the Labour Party. That is bad, but, again, not all-decisive. There have been few left challenges for leader in the whole history of the Labour Party, in lively times or in dull. Conversely, the reasonable showing of a left candidate in the recent Scottish Labour Party election does not undo the fact that the Scottish Labour Party is in worse condition than the British.

**Duncan links insistence that the Labour Party and affiliated unions are hopeless with the idea that the problem can be bypassed by agitating for a workers' government. If the mass labour movement is trammelled, then a workers' government is more abstract and remote, not less so.**

Colin Foster, north London

## Hold the Socialist Party and Mark Serwotka to account!

### The Left By James Marine



**The Socialist Party (SP) has defended the PCS civil service union's decision to "suspend" national and Group elections for up to a year. (Groups are the major sub-parts of the union.)**

The SP headlined its article: "PCS: Safeguarding its future in the face of vicious Tory attacks".

"Faced with a temporary but very sharp drop in income as a result of check-off ending, the PCS National Executive Committee (NEC) has had to make difficult decisions to cut expenditure, including suspending for one year the union's annual elections".

This is nonsense. Yes, the PCS is facing a financial tough time but not so bad that it cannot afford elections. (Even Greece can afford to vote).

The elections would cost about £650,000 to run yet the union's magazine costs £700,000 a year to produce. Instead of putting that publication online for a year, the NEC choose to keep it whilst dumping elections.

Then there are full time officer wages. PCS is being colonised by SP members. If they lived up the SP's policy of full time officers (FTOs) being paid a workers' wage, then we could "afford" democracy.

The union is selling its headquarters for £25 million. A big chunk of that will plug the hole in one of the union's pension schemes. Yet there will be more than enough left over to run several elections, let alone just one this year.

Our affiliation to the TUC costs nearly £650,000. In a choice between members having a vote on who represents them or paying hundreds of thousands to the TUC and subsidising Francis O'Grady's lifestyle, having a vote wins hands down.

In other words there are plenty of ways to afford democracy but the SP doesn't want them.

By suspending the elections the SP using a real crisis to avoid being judged by the members. There is a good chance this year that the SP would lose seats on the Executive. That

could mean putting a proposed merger with Unite in danger.

The Socialist Party and PCS general secretary, Mark Serwotka, must be condemned across the labour movement. Their actions are disgraceful. If the right wing did this then there would be howls of indignation from the left; because it is Mark Serwotka, the criticism is muted at best. The SP, and Mark Serwotka, have crossed a fundamental line and must be held to account.

**But course the best method of accounting, national elections, has been denied members for the time being. When the time comes, then the SP and Mark Serwotka must be driven out of office.**

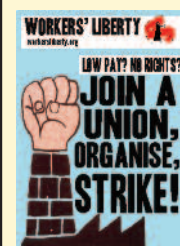
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# Euro-solidarity can stop euro-cuts

**On hearing the first declarations from the ministers in Greece's new Syriza-led government, elected on 25 January, the invisible hand of the markets reacted. The stock market lost 8%. The interest rate on Greek bonds went up.**

Some EU and IMF leaders sent harder messages about the need for compliance — Angela Merkel, Christine Lagarde — and some tried to be more conciliatory (Barack Obama, Francois Hollande, Matteo Renzi).

Cristobal Montoro, finance minister in Spain's right-wing government, was aghast that any government should be less compliant with Euro-austerity than his own. There could be no question of "changing the rules", and if Syriza wants to ease suffering, "the question is, where will this money come from?"

The leadership of Syriza, seeing the international pressures, is trying to secure the support of a section of the Greek ruling class. This was largely the political logic that led to the government's cooperation with ANEL, and now the unacceptable plan to propose Dimitris Avramopoulos, a political leader of the Right, for a new President of the Republic.

By way of international trips by economics minister Yanis Varoufakis and prime minister Alexis Tsipras, Syriza is trying to build an alliance for the American ("expansive") model of capitalist crisis management against with the German ("restrictive") model.

And a part of the Greek ruling class would like to use a "left-wing, intransigent" government as a means to extract more concessions from the Troika. This intention explains the friendlier attitude exhibited by some sections of the ruling class and press to Syriza.

But no "flirting" with bourgeois parties, bourgeois leaders and other capital factors are going to make the bourgeoisie really friendly and tolerant towards a Left government's pro-working class measures.

The leaders of France and Italy, Francois Hollande and Matteo Renzi, both have reasons to use Greece as a lever against Angela Merkel for relaxation of austerity. Both of them are threatened by opposition within their countries. However, they are highly unlikely to support the most radical demands of the Greek Prime Minister. Besides, French banks will bear a very large share of the losses if some Greek debt is cancelled.

The EU leaders are prepared to consider some compromises with the new government. It is not their first choice to push Greece out of the euro, and consequently destabilise the European economy.

But the extent of it is probably a little more time for negotiations and perhaps a repayment extension, along with a limited financial "precautionary credit line" and a guarantee

of liquidity to Greek banks.

Even apart from pure economic calculations, the EU leaders do not want to allow the mushrooming of Syriza anti-austerity types of government in Europe. In Spain elections must be held before the end of 2015, and currently the new leftish anti-austerity party Podemos tops the polls.

If the Greek government demonstrates the necessary resistance, then we will probably see something like events of March 2013 in Cyprus. The banks' liquidity will be blocked and one ultimatum will succeed another.

If the leadership of Syriza wants to stay true to its pro-working-class commitments, then the only realistic and effective response is:

- European and international working-class solidarity,. The huge 300,000 demonstration in Madrid on 31 January, waving Syriza and Greek flags, organised by Podemos, shows the potential.

## EUROPE

**Syriza calls for the EU to convene a European Leaders' conference on the debt. Better to organise an international conference of all organisations of the working class across Europe to fight the cuts.**

- No illusion about the EU and the eurozone. For the United Socialist States of Europe!

- Immediately mobilise workers to actively support the upcoming the battle against international and Greek capital, with mass meetings in workplaces and neighbourhoods. Simultaneously appeal to workers across Europe to show solidarity and to fight the cuts and "structural reforms" (attacks on workers' rights) in their own countries.

- Support workers' struggles in Greece:

The 600 Alter media workers, unpaid for three years and then made redundant, are asking the new government to punish the owners of Alter, to get their wages back, and to re-open the station under new ownership

The 2500 ERT media workers have published a manifesto, calling for: all of them to get their jobs back; an ERT run under workers' control; an ERT open to society and directly linked with solidarity structures, the social movements, and the neighbourhood community movements.

Similar demands have been raised by the unions of Bank workers, transportation workers, and council workers, and



collectives of the unemployed

- Organisation for workers' control, including taking over workplaces shut down by their owners, and workers' control of food distribution. Revitalisation and reinvigoration of the neighbourhood communities and the building of workers' and popular committees' councils to combat the fascist gangs of Golden Dawn and all threats of military coup.

In the battle likely to open up between the Greek people and the EU leaders, Greece's hopes depend on Europe-wide solidarity. If labour movements apply enough pressure, the EU leaders will be forced to ease the grip. And that will be a gain for other workers too.

To a certain extent it is true that we cannot assess the politics of a government that is just one week old. The defeat of the Samaras-Venizelos government has already created a breathing space for the working class. If another memorandum government had been elected, then the day after the election would have been another one with new pension cuts, new redundancies, new tax increases, and new working class and defeats.

There is neither a "drachma" road to socialism nor a Euro-expansionist road to socialism. There are no short cuts, but only the road of defiant struggle.

**The roads we will traverse are unknown, but our compass will be steadily pointing to workers' power and workers' control of production and distribution.**

# Challenge to a whole era

**By Martin Thomas**

**The Syriza-led government in Greece is hemmed in more tightly, by the flows of the international financial markets and by the economic supervisions of the EU, than left-reformist governments of earlier times. Simultaneously, its efforts have more chance to set going and feed into a Europe-wide revolt larger than its modest initial aims.**

Two events in 1982-3 set up the current capitalist era. In March 1983 France's coalition government of the Socialist Party and the Communist Party shifted to a more privatising, welfare-cutting, market-worshipping programme than the country's right-wing governments of the years 1958-81. Previously, after its election in May 1981, it had nationalised 12 industrial firms, 36 banks and two financial corporations; extended union rights; substantially raised the minimum wage; and cut maximum working hours. But now financiers were selling off the franc.

In August 1982 Mexico's government had declared default on repayments of money borrowed since international credit dealings had exploded after the big oil prices of 1973. Other defaults followed; countries got locked into "structural adjustment programmes" from the IMF and the World Bank.

Apart from some countries with large oil and gas exports (Venezuela, Bolivia...), and with some delays, pretty much all governments since then have accepted neo-liberal parameters.

Variations within neo-liberal parameters can be important. In 1984, New Zealand's Labour government banned nuclear-armed US ships from its waters, and Australia's Labor government reinstated social health insurance, while both ruthlessly geared their countries' economies to world-market competition.

The parameters are enforced by the big, fast flows of the international financial markets. The UK in 1945 had relatively bigger debts than Greece has now. But only 17% of the debt was held outside Britain, and most of that by US lenders; the British government could (with difficulty) do deals with the US, and, with exchange controls, moneyed people in Britain could not and did not at will dump British debt to buy other debt.

In 2010, 70% of Greece's debt, and 52% of all euro countries' debt, was held outside the countries.

In the eurozone, Greece faces a central bank, and a European Commission, outside its control, determined to impose neo-liberal "structural reform".

Thus, Syriza's "Thessaloniki programme", modest enough in itself, and its mild proposal to have an international debt conference for Greece as Germany had in 1953, become dramatic.

It is not exactly true that capitalism is so economically strained that even modest proposals become revolutionary. The eurozone has the size and weight to grant Greece's demands even without breaching neo-liberal rules.

In 1967 the Stalinist ruler of North Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh, had sufficient memories of his Leninist youth to tell an Italian delegation who earnestly asked him how they could help Vietnam's struggle against US imperialism: "Fate la rivoluzione in casa vostra!": make the revolution in your own country.

If workers across Europe can respond to Greece's struggle by making, not yet the revolution, but the militant anti-cuts struggle in our own countries, then that can force the EU leaders to grant Greece respite.

**If we do that, though, it won't end there. A victory for Greece even in limited terms would raise confidence for change explosively. That is why the EU leaders are so reluctant to give concessions. It is also why we can and must force them to back down.**



# To secure reforms, fight capitalist power

By Dora Polenta

**On 30 January Jeroen Dijsselbloem, Dutch finance minister and chair of the Eurogroup of finance ministers, awkwardly shook hands with Greece's new finance minister Yanis Varoufakis, at a press conference after they had met in Athens, and whispered..."you have just killed the [EU/ ECB/ IMF] Troika". Varoufakis responded: "Wow!"**

That felt good. It did not feel as good when Tsipras subsequently committed himself to the "fulfilling of our debt obligations towards the ECB and the IMF". It did not feel as good when Yanis Varoufakis said on 1 February in Paris that the Greek government is willing to "pay both principal and interest to the creditors". It did not feel as good when Varoufakis stated that "personally this [privatisation of the port of Piraeus] has my full support" (BBC Newsnight, 31 January).

It felt good that on Saturday 31 January, at the first anti-fascist demonstration under the Syriza-led government, the police were unarmed. It did not feel as good when Panousis, the Minister of Public Order and Citizen Protection, characterised counter-terrorism as a wonderful service.

It felt good when Minister of Reconstruction Panayiotis Lafazanis stated that he is going to halt the further privatization of DEPA and DEH. It did not feel as good when he did not commit to the full nationalisation of DEH.

It felt good when the government took symbolic actions such as a visit to the memorial for resistance fighters against the Nazis, refusing to take religious oaths, removing barriers to the Unknown Soldier, auctioning off the luxurious state car, and reinstating sacked ministry cleaners and school guards.

It did not feel as good when Dragasakis stated the government's commitment to the "proper functioning of banks and an increase in their shareholder value". It did not feel as good when Dragasakis stated that the government is preparing a "catalogue of opportunities for investors". It did not feel as good when Syriza went for a coalition government with ANEL and indicated it would nominate a right-wing politician as President of the Republic.

It felt good when the new government reaffirmed that it would adhere to the Thessaloniki declaration: the restoration of the minimum wage and collective bargaining, an increase in pensions, the cancellation of privatisation, abolition of the new "Enfia" property tax, re-hiring of sacked public employees, elimination of important counter-reforms in education and health, and the legalization of "second-generation" immigrants.

However, the revolutionary left should warn that the attempt to implement these basic measures, in order to improve the living standards of the working class people, should be part of a program that will remove the economic and political power of the ruling class. If we stay on the treacherous ground of capitalism, every pro-labour reform will eventually founder.

Assume, even, that the new government eventually does negotiate a "haircut" of the debt. In current capitalist conditions the new government will still need to follow a permanent austerity policy in order to stop the debt becoming again "unsustainable" and to reassure the "markets" (i.e. local and foreign big capital).

Only if a government nationalises the banking system and large companies (and the giant property holdings of the Greek Orthodox Church) under workers' and social management and control, and urges solidarity with Euro-



Yanis Varoufakis

pean workers and common struggle for such a policy across Europe, can it ensure the necessary resources to exert significant and sustainable pro-working class politics.

We need to redirect the money from the bankers to ordinary people. We need to impose heavy taxation on the profits of capitalists and mega rich who saw their profits soaring up during the austerity years. The only way to ensure that the money will not "fly", that there is not going to be a bank run, is the nationalisation of banks –which have been "bailed out" and "recapitalised" repeatedly- under workers' control.

Workers in both the public and the private sector should now demand their jobs back. This imperative cannot wait for the approval of the "markets" or the Troika or the European Commission. We should demand that any business that cannot or does not want to operate its factory be confiscated and placed under workers' management and control.

Syriza's commitments to change in the state, predominantly to combat corruption and the democratisation of the police, cannot be applied within the framework of Greece's current organically authoritarian and corrupt state apparatus. No democratic minister, no matter how morally irreproachable, can convert the police force and the riot police into protectors of the citizens.

**The current security forces are specifically structured and trained for the suppression of the people's struggles. They must be dissolved and re-founded on a truly democratic basis, under the democratic control of the mass organisations.**

# The left in

Thanasis Kourkoulas and Sotiris Martalis from DEA (Internationalist Workers' Left), a Trotskyist organisation in the left of Syriza, spoke to Micheál McEoin in Athens on 24 January, just before the election.

**Sotiris began by setting out the backdrop to the election and the crisis in Greece:**

GDP went down 25%, which had only happened before during the Second World War. Wages are down 35-40%. Taxes have increased eight-fold, and now we have near 30% unemployment. They destroyed laws protecting workers such as collective bargaining, and there are no restrictions on lay-offs.

We have had big struggles against these measures. The peak was in 2010-12. We have had over 35 general strikes now. Three were 48 hours. There have been occupations of state buildings, the squares movement and the "we won't pay" movement against road-tolls. The people succeeded in overthrowing two governments — Papandreou and Papademos.

But they didn't succeed in stopping austerity, so they turned to the electoral solution and choose Syriza. The social democrats [Pasok] collapsed. Why choose Syriza and not the KKE or Antarsya? The KKE had 7.5% in 2009 while Syriza had 4.5%. It was better organised, with a larger network.

Syriza was involved in and supported resistance movements. Antarsya did too, but not the KKE. During general strikes the KKE organise a separate demonstration with their own members. In the squares movement, they said it was petty-bourgeois and that they would not be involved.

After 2012, the workers' struggles didn't stop. Struggles happen every week, with ERT, the cleaners at the Minister of Finance, dock workers, and public sector workers who organised public assemblies against cuts to jobs. Forces from Syriza have been supporting these struggles, so you can understand why the people are looking to Syriza.

Syriza gave an alternative, a solution. Tsipras called for a government of the left. Everybody laughed when he made that call because Syriza had little more than 4%. In the election in [June] 2012, Syriza went up to 27%.

## SYRIZA

**Syriza called for unity of the left against the ruling-class, capital and the austerity measures. That was different from the KKE and Antarsya.**

In the current elections, the ruling class are trying not to give Syriza the majority of 151 seats, so they are supporting To Potami — a creation of the mass media. All the TV channels show their leader speaking, a journalist from one of the biggest channels.

The KKE attack Syriza and say they will not give their support. To Potami is using this to argue that people should vote for them as the reins to not give a majority to Syriza.

The left has a big tradition. We had the Civil War. We have 45 left organisations and a tradition of involvement in the workers' movement.

After the rise of neoliberalism in Greece, the left had problems at the end of the 90s. It was fragmented in the face of attacks. The KKE policy was sectarian, as was that of many revolutionary organisations too.

The Syriza experiment began as a unity of the left in the beginning of the 2000s, and the first time it stood in elections as Syriza was 2004. Syriza is not like Podemos, Die Linke or the Left Bloc in Portugal; it is completely different. Syriza has local branches and assemblies. They have a balance of tendencies inside, and roots in neighbourhoods.

Podemos is undemocratic. You vote online for Pablo Iglesias's candidates in internal elections, and you can't really have a discussion of different opinions on the internet. On programme, they really say nothing on questions such as Catalonia. The Syriza programme is more left.

It's not been easy, and DEA has twice split away. In 2009,



# Inside Syriza



**Reality of austerity in Greece. This is why the European ruling class needs to be confronted**

they want to put a social democrat as head of the list in the municipal elections in Athens. We said that was not acceptable, and went outside and stood with the ex-Maoists. We got 2.4%, which was half of what Syriza got. There have been conflicts.

Syriza has been difficult to build. It's not a model you can just take and apply anywhere. There have been lots of fights, back and forward.

After the success of the Syriza experiment, the NAR and others created Antarsya, basically in order to survive. The best of their results are in local elections. They got 0.36% in 2009 and 0.72% in the Euro-elections of 2014. This is very small compared with what is needed.

As for DEA: in 2000, we split from SEK [the Greek group linked with the SWP in Britain], mostly on questions about how we build organisations and our relationship with the rest of the left. We involved ourselves in the movement against European capitalist globalisation and we had a relationship with Synaspismos, who were then outside Parliament. Synaspismos, one KKE split, and one Eurocommunist split formed a committee for unity which involved DEA. For this we were denounced by the rest of the left, but in thirty years of building the revolutionary party to resist attacks, where did we get?

It wasn't easy. We have big differences with Syriza. In the PT in Brazil, Trotskyists were involved because it was a workers' party with links to the unions. PSTU [the Morenoists] were sectarian, and the Fourth International section stayed in, but dissolved under pressure. When Lulu controlled the party and they left, they had less than when they started.

In Podemos, Pablo Iglesias said that the Trotskyists must dissolve. The Fourth International section had a congress and dissolved.

We have our independent organisation. On demonstrations, we sell our paper and have stalls. In neighbourhoods we are known.

In the last Congress of Syriza we had 120 delegates. We elected six members to the Central Committee and one to the Politbureau. We resist the huge pressure to dissolve or else be forced out of Syriza.

The Left Platform of Syriza is the left-wing of Synaspismos

and DEA, and it's more than 30% of the Syriza congress. A third of that 30% is the Red Network [around DEA].

In the unity Congress, when the leadership slogan was for a "party of the members", we said we couldn't dissolve ourselves. We made an alliance on that with the Left Current and the left of the majority. They told Tsipras that he couldn't wipe out DEA. Tsipras stepped back and made a compromise. He gave us "reasonable time" to make a decision but now they no longer even speak of it.

We have kept our independence and our newspaper ever two weeks. We sold more than 1200 of the last two issues through distribution by the members, and we also sell through the kiosk distribution network. We have two MPs, a mayor in the Philadelphia neighbourhood of Athens, and a lot of local councillors, as well as 25 members elected to leading bodies in the trades unions.

Which road now depends on what happens inside Syriza. The big bourgeois papers say that they cannot accept blackmail from the Left Platform. If you have 20 or 25 Left Platform MPs, it's "blackmail from extremists." They openly ask Tsipras to get rid of [Panagiotis] Lafazanis, leader of the Left Platform and expel our comrade who is on the Syriza Politbureau.

There is a battle over where Syriza will go. Maybe the Syriza leaders will succeed in controlling the left, but it's a battle and all the hopes of the left now are focused in Syriza.

You can imagine if Tsipras makes a compromise with the ECB and cuts wages, those 25 MPs could bring the government down. DEA is building a visible organisation with an audience in Syriza and in a small part of the working-class.

All the other organisations in Syriza dissolved. The ex-Maoists who support the majority and are on the right. Even the autonomists dissolved; they are in the left-wing of the majority.

Our organisation is 80% workers. It is smaller amongst youth and has big successes against fascism. We've built Sunday schools for immigrants, with between three and four hundred volunteers, working with over a thousand migrants. We built the "Expel Racism" movement and recruited some immigrant members. Lots left during the crisis, back to Albania and other countries, but we have involved migrants in trade union demos as part of the same fight.

**Thanasis Kourkoulas added:**

This is not a pre-revolutionary period. People have not decided to take power and the economy into their hands. If they did, Syriza would not have just over 30,000 members and us 350... In 2012, after the elections, people hoped Syriza would be the government and that we could stop austerity by the electoral road.

That didn't happen so we still have a movement at a low ebb and many struggles here and there which continue to have a left political direction but are not able to stop austerity. Many more will vote Syriza but do not have self-confidence to fight on the streets and in workplaces, with some important exceptions.

We believe that Syriza should have a transitional programme ending in socialist revolution. You can still find some parts in the Syriza programme but not others. We still have big fights on the Eurozone and the nationalisation of the banks.

Our alliance says "no more sacrifices for the Euro". This is the Syriza Congress decision but not the leadership position. We also fight over the issue of coalitions. The last Congress was for coalition only with the left and no one who supported the austerity measures.

We fight over democracy in Syriza. The Congress decided to vote for the President as well as the Central Committee. We disagreed because it created two things that are equivalent. The result we can see now. Tsipras is doing things without asking the Central Committee and the Politbureau. We find out Syriza decisions through newspapers.

And we fought for is the independence of our revolutionary organisation. People who asked us why we didn't dissolve at Congress now say to us that it was a good idea because more people disagree with Tsipras. Some agree with the Left Platform over programme, and some of the left part of the majority agree over coalition. There are now thousands in the party who support us over coalition.

## CIRCLE

**We try to widen the circle of people we know, build the Red Network, and at the same time have an independent intervention into the movement, workplaces and the anti-fascist movement.**

We have 75 billion euros of bonds falling due in July / August. Either they accept a loan with new measures or they don't.

We try to have good relations with all parts of the movement. Our MPs have been involved in hundreds of struggles and have built trust. We also try to link up with the revolutionary left outside Syriza in neighbourhoods, workplaces and anti-fascist committees. Some Syriza and Antarsya people in unions participate in joint work.

The DEA Congress decided not to be in government or any state positions. A government of the left is not a workers' government. We support it to take forward the self-confidence of workers. It's unacceptable for us if Syriza make a government with bourgeois parties. We do not accept any national unity or national salvation government. It's a line we cannot cross.

**Sotiris:**

The youth is part of the majority. During the last democracy discussion and regarding coalitions, they moved towards us. But they never voted in the Central Committee with us. They are part of the left of the majority but they do not openly vote with the Left Platform.

The Thessaloniki programme is an attempt to be more specific about Syriza's initial measures. We did not vote for it because it leaned to the right. In theory, it is true that the rest of the programme is still there. In theory.

But to enact the Thessaloniki programme they will need to go into direct confrontation with the ruling-class. In the crisis, there will be a fight over wages and taxation. There will be a conflict from day number one even on this short-term programme. We will not have to wait very long to see what shape the government takes.

**This will give people confidence to fight. We are not optimists for the intentions of Tsipras but for the new openings for the radical left in Greece and in Europe.**



# Don't let Golden Dawn catch breath

By Dora Polenta

The anti-fascist counter-demonstration on 31 January was a good starting point. It had over 5,000 people, despite the fact that it was called in a few days, immediately after the election, in response to Golden Dawn's annual commemoration of three Greek navy officers who died in a Greek-Turkish conflict over the uninhabited islets of Imia in 1996.

The demonstration drew together unaffiliated leftists and people from Antarsya (mainly from Aran, Okde Spartakos, NAR), Syriza, Xekinima, EEK, anarchist groups, and anti-fascist committees from the whole of Attika.

In contrast, Golden Dawn's major regular public rally had barely 1,000 people. The number is very small considering that Golden Dawn is the third party in parliament, with 388,447 votes nationwide and 130,000 in Attika (the region around Athens). Golden Dawn, although can win vot-

ers, is as yet far from being a fascist movement powerful on the streets. We should not let them catch breath.

We must demand that the new government and the Minister of Justice take all necessary measures to start as soon as possible the trial of a number of Nazi leaders such as Michaloliakos, Lagos, and Pappas.

New Democracy prime minister Antonis Samaras began his term by talking about the "recapture of the cities from immigrants". Immigrants were hit twice, by the crisis and by racist attacks. The left should demand:

- Legalisation of all immigrants, and without prohibitive conditions
- Citizenship for all the 200,000 children of immigrants who were born or grew up in Greece
- Asylum, shelter and full rights to all refugees
- Remove all the racist measures and institutions that the EU has imposed. Open borders to refugees.
- Close the detention camps
- Places of worship for Muslims.



"Death to fascism" —anti-fascist demo on 31 January

## What the new Greek government has done

By Dora Polenta

**Minister of Productive Reconstruction Panagiotis Lafazanis has announced cancellation of the process of privatisation of DEH [the state electricity utility]. He also cancelled the previous government's civil mobilisation orders and granted free electricity to 300,000 households from the most vulnerable social groups.**

Lafazanis said: "DEH will operate as a state company having as its sole criterion environment-friendly productive development". Additionally, Lafazanis stated that the new government is against the previous government's policy of "investment at all costs" and reconfirmed the government's opposition to the gold mining activities of Eldorado Gold at Skouries Chalkidiki.

Minister of Shipping Theodoros Dritsas said: "The public nature of the port of Piraeus is preserved. The privatisation of the port stops here".

Predictably "Communist" China denounced the Syriza-led government, and called for support the agreement made by the right-wing previous Greek government for a deal over Piraeus port with Chinese company Cosco.

"We intend to ask the Greek government to protect the rights and legitimate interests of Chinese companies in Greece, among them Cosco" said Shen Ntaniangk, spokesman of the Chinese Ministry of Commerce. The Syriza-led government should now go a step further and renationalise Pier 3 of Piraeus port, which was practically given away to Cosco by the ND government in 2009. Port Employees Federation of Greece (OMYLE) secretariat member Anastasia Frantzeskaki said that returning control to the Piraeus Port Authority would mean immediate gains for dock and port workers.

"The day after the privatisation of Pier 3, a new situation emerged in the port concerning labour relations. Something like 500 colleagues of mine were out of jobs the day after. At the same time Cosco was granted the right to use people in the area who were not categorised as dock workers, so they didn't have a collective bargaining agreement or dockworkers' rights."

Working conditions at Pier 3 are abysmal, with health and safety measures neglected and workers on call 24/7.

"They find out only an hour or two before that they are going to work a certain shift," she explains, adding that shifts could end up being anything from two to 14 hours. A dockworker's phone might go off any day of the week, regardless

of whether they took the day off or not.

Syriza's commitment to revoke all unconstitutional dismissals was reiterated by the new Deputy Minister of Administrative Reform Giorgos Katrougalos. He stated that all public sector and council workers that have been unconstitutionally dismissed will be re-employed, he stated his commitment to get rid of "reserve employment" (lay-offs pending dismissal).

He committed himself to reinstate immediately the 594 cleaners of the ministry of finance, who persevered for 18 months in their defiant struggle to get their jobs back. (But not with an 8-hour stable and permanent job; instead, under their previous terms, i.e. four hours and flexible employment). Furthermore, he committed to immediately reinstate the school guards and teachers in technical education.

However, in his first meeting with the public-sector trade union leadership workers Adedy, he stated that public sector wages, which have been reduced by up to 40% during the memoranda years, cannot be increased during 2015.

### WAGE

**The imminent resetting of the minimum wage to 751 euros was announced by the Minister of Labour and Social Solidarity, Panos Skourletis.**

"Within the first bills, there are those related to the reinstatement of the collective bargaining agreements, the law on banning conscriptions and civil mobilisation orders [used to force strikers back to work by decreeing them as under military discipline] and those associated with the protection of workers against employers' lock-outs and collective redundancies and to restore the minimum wage to 751 euros,"

The reintroduction of the "13th month" of pensions was announced by the Minister of Social Insurance, Dimitris Stratioulis. The new government will:

1. Restore the public, social and redistributive nature of the insurance system.
2. Scrap the memoranda commitments to reduce pensions and raise the age limit.
3. Abolish the death clause and zero deficit clause in supplementary pensions.
4. Gradually restore pensions.

The Deputy Minister of Finance, Nadia Valavani, has asked for the resignation of the chairman of the board and the CEO of Taiped (the official privatisation fund). She stated that the government's intends to stop the privatization process, at least in the form of Taiped.

The new government has prioritised cancellation of the tendering process for "selling off" the 14 regional airports.

The educational system will be restructured as announced by the Deputy Minister of Education, Tasos Courakis. The main measures will be:

1. The abolition of the nationwide type exams in the first and second grade,
2. More opportunities for students to study at their local universities, facilitation of university transfers
3. Abolition of the law of expulsion of university students for exceeding the maximum allowed years of study. Every undergraduate and postgraduate student is free to study for as many years as she or he likes.
4. Reinstatement of the university administrative workers that were placed in reserve employment
5. Reinstatement of all school teachers of technical colleges and all school guards that were fired

When asked whether the police forces should be disarmed, the new interior minister, Nikos Voutsis, reiterated Syriza's position that the 1996 legislative framework in place states that it is recommended that during demonstrations and sporting events the police should be unarmed.

Citizenship for all 200,000 children of immigrants born or raised in Greece has been announced by the Deputy Minister of Immigration Policy, Tasia Christodouloupoulou. Christodouloupoulou also stated that the government will end the refugee detention camps created by the memoranda government.

But the minister of National Defence, ANEL leader Panos Kammenos, stated: "Greece will respect European immigration policies. If the rules of the Dublin agreements are applicable throughout Europe, and therefore also in Greece, we should apply the principle that illegal immigrants should be repelled and return to their countries"

New health minister Panagiotis Kourouplis said that his first priority would be the development of primary health care, aiming both to better serve the citizens and to decongest the hospitals.

The new Deputy Minister of Health, Andreas Xanthos, said that the payment of five euros for hospital outpatient appointments and one euro for each prescription would be eliminated.

**They both stated that the government would guarantee full access for all uninsured citizens to public health services, tests, medications and hospitalisation in need.**



# Permanent revolution and the Irish left

By Micheál MacEoin

**Workers' Liberty has recently examined Trotskyist debates on Ireland (*Trotskyists debate Ireland*, WL3/45). There is another set of relevant debates worth looking about: over how, and if, Trotsky's theory of "permanent revolution" relates to Ireland.**

The first debate took place in 1966-67 in the largely émigré Irish Workers' Group (IWG). It was an attempt to clear away some of the confusions generated by a mechanical application of the theory to Irish realities.

In 1983, another debate took place in *Socialist Organiser* (forerunner of *Solidarity*). That debate showed how confusion present in the 1960s had only deepened with the outbreak and ongoing violence of the Troubles.

The 1966-7 debate was launched by an editorial written by Gerry Lawless in the *Irish Militant* arguing that the "major point of confusion in the Irish left today centres on the national question and its relationship to the struggle for socialism," and claiming that Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution showed the model.

Lawless's motivation was to counter the Stalinist/Maoist theories being propagated by the Irish Communist Group led by Brendan Clifford, based on a mechanical and scholastic application of a "stages theory" to Ireland. The theory was that the bourgeoisie must first overthrow "feudalism", heralding a prolonged stage of bourgeois capitalist rule, during which the working-class would grow and then proceed to overthrow capitalism.

The theory resembled the Menshevik position that Russia, in 1905 and 1917, could not have a workers' revolution – the bourgeoisie would first have to make a bourgeois revolution. A variant of the theory had been used by the Stalinist bureaucracy in Russia to choke the Chinese Revolution in the 1920s. In both cases, the consequences bound the proletariat to a position of political subordination to the bourgeoisie.

Lawless's intention was to reach out for the theory which "refuted" the Stalinist stages theory, i.e. "permanent revolution." However in doing so, Lawless made a concession to the Stalino-Menshevik methodology.

Just as the Menshevik theory was based on a scholastic conception of an idealised French Revolution applied to Russia, and the Cliffordite approach borrowed Russian and Chinese Stalinist theories to apply to Ireland, Lawless abstracted a theory developed by Trotsky from the circumstances for which Trotsky developed it, and tried to make it a template for Ireland.

## PERMANENT REVOLUTION

**What was Trotsky's original formulation of permanent revolution?**

Firstly, it was a development of Marx's analysis of the failure of the 1848 revolution in Germany and the need for proletarian class independence in revolutionary situations.

In the first years of the twentieth century Trotsky argued that the revolution in Russia against the Tsar would be bourgeois. Though capitalist social relations had been penetrating Russia in the last decades of the nineteenth-century, it remained a semi-feudal social formation in its land structure and its absolutist state.

But the uneven and combined economic development inside Russia had created a social structure in which the bourgeoisie was numerically and socially weak, and unable to put itself at the head of the workers and peasants. Trotsky argued that the peasants, though they would play a huge part in the revolution, could not develop a clearly distinctive class program. It would have to be the working class which led the peasants and the oppressed against the Tsar.

The working class, once in power, would be compelled by the logic of the struggle, to go beyond the limits of the bourgeois revolution. Faced with a lock-out or a strike, for example, it would have to take radical measures to back the workers against the capitalists; it would have to make inroads against capitalist private property. Thus the bourgeois revolution, with the workers at its head, would, through working class activity, be converted "uninterruptedly" into a socialist revolution.

What are the key points from this, and how do they apply (or not) to Ireland?

First, permanent revolution is concerned with the role of



Republican mural to Bobby Sands

the working-class in a bourgeois revolution, in a pre-capitalist feudal or semi-feudal country that is connected to the capitalist world economy.

Do these conditions fit Ireland? Sean Matgamna wrote in the IWG debate: "As an analysis of [social] forces and a proletarian perspective of action for feudal and semi-feudal countries, the 'Theory of Permanent Revolution' does not apply literally to Ireland."

Ireland was not feudal. The land question in Ireland was settled — from above — in the late 19th and early 20th century and a class of capitalist farmers created. Any land question, from then on, would be a capitalist one.

The two states in Ireland — north and south — were both capitalist states. However far they were from the "norm" of a bourgeois state, no reasonable analysis could conclude that any class other than the bourgeoisie exercised social and political power on both sides of the border.

The problem with Lawless's editorial was, Matgamna argued, that he "confined [himself] to an abstract outline of the 'Theory of Permanent Revolution', merely intimating that it answers the professional confusionists in general [and on Ireland in particular] — without spelling it out. But it must be spelled out ...

"When you talk of there being no period of capitalist rule [between the bourgeois and proletarian revolutions] this is correct for the Theory — but apply it to Ireland and it appears to say that the bourgeoisie don't hold power yet. To deny that the capitalists have direct power in Ireland, even if they in turn are not their own masters, would be absurd."

## THE TROUBLES

**The movement for Catholic civil rights, the Protestant backlash, and breakdown of the sectarian six-county state led to British troops going onto the streets in the North in August 1969. These events restarted much discussion about Ireland on the British left.**

After the Troubles intensified in 1971, most of the left backed the demand for "Troops Out". But the slogan was disconnected from any wider political solution to Catholic-Protestant division. "Troops Out", advocated as a cure-all, implied strongly that the only issue at stake was the involvement of British imperialism in Ireland. The existence of one million Protestant Unionists in the north-east of the island was, if not ignored totally, then relegated to an epiphenomenal status. What role did "permanent revolution" play in this set of "anti-imperialist" politics?

As we saw earlier, Trotsky's permanent revolution was a perspective for independent working-class action, and an independent working-class political party. But this emphasis was largely absent in post-Trotsky "orthodox Trotskyist" accounts of the theory. It was used, instead, to "explain" the Cuban and Chinese revolutions, in which the working-class played no decisive political role, and to rationalise adaptation to Stalinist and Third World nationalist forces.

After the Stalinist social system expanded in the 1940s and 1950s to cover a third of the world, some "orthodox Trotskyists" saw this as an expansion of the "world revolution", and conceived of this revolution as a process disconnected from

working-class agency.

The Stalinist bureaucracy created states in its own image, in which the working-class was crushed and enslaved. For the "orthodox Trotskyists", these states were, "degenerated and deformed workers' states", or "post-capitalist", that is to say, in advance of capitalism, even in "transition to socialism."

In Ireland, this version of "permanent revolution" could mean two positions which, though seemingly opposed, in fact, intersected in a common denial of the need for a democratic programme for Ireland.

The first position involved a fantasy about the latent socialist potential of the Provisional IRA.

Matgamna spelled out the logic, writing in 2009 that: "For the duration of the Provo War 'Permanent Revolution' would serve to rationalise accommodation to the Provisional IRA: up to the Good Friday Agreement, there were always 'Trotskyists', and not by any means only in Ireland, to argue that, any day now, the Provo war would 'develop' into the Irish workers' revolution."

The second position was a maximalist variant of "permanent revolution" which saw an unresolved national question in Ireland and asserted that it would be solved under socialism, so "socialism was the answer".

Both these positions denied the need for a democratic programme aimed at uniting the working-class north and south, Catholic and Protestant and of bridging the gap between working-class trade union struggles and socialism.

The first position denied the identity of a separate community of Protestants in Ireland, seeing them as a passive function of imperialism; the second position denied the need for a democratic programme as part of the fight for socialism.

In the wake of hunger strikes by IRA prisoners, and before the Anglo-Irish Agreement (1985), a debate on these issues took place in *Socialist Organiser*. It was provoked by an interview with Mick Duffy, a Belfast shop steward and supporter of the Militant (now Socialist Party), who argued that workers' unity in a recent NHS pay dispute could lead to class unity on the political level.

An outraged response from the Nottingham *Socialist Organiser* group argued that the interview was "unacceptable propaganda for the national chauvinist politics of the Militant." In his response to the letter, Matgamna looked at the Militant's politics on Northern Ireland and how they should be answered.

The Militant were economistic. Looking at the NHS strikes, for instance, they saw in temporary and episodic working-class unity on the economic or trade union level unrealistic potential for wider political unity within the sectarian structures of the Northern Ireland state. In the Militant's view, national and democratic questions would simply dissolve in the solvent of trade union action.

Northern Ireland did have a history of impressive economic working-class struggles. Time after time, however, the "constitutional question" reared its head, and working-class unity foundered on the rocks of national division.

Broader class unity on the political front, argued Matgamna, could not come without the labour movement advocating a democratic programme which met the realities of the "constitutional question" head-on.

A democratic programme, which Militant lacked, "has to be part of filling the void between trade union minimalism and the socialist revolution." For Matgamna, its content should be "a federal united Ireland with as much autonomy for the Protestant community as is compatible with the democratic rights of the majority of the Irish people."

In response, *Socialist Organiser* supporter Tony Richardson (who is now with Socialist Resistance) wrote that "Northern Ireland is dominated economically and militarily by imperialism" and "the starting point for us must be the struggle to end that." The force he looked to? "The Republican movement is anti-imperialist, as is most of the Catholic population."

Almost as an afterthought, he added: "Of course, within that struggle we attempt to give it a class content by fighting for the Permanent Revolution" by "connecting the anti-imperialist struggle with the need for the working-class to take power through a socialist programme."

This approach typifies the blurring together of vicarious

*Continued on page 10*



Irish nationalism with abstract socialist maximalism. Though it is thought that socialists need to “break down the pro-imperialism of the Protestant workers”, no democratic programme is advocated which could address this task.

It is conceded that “on the road to [a socialist united Ireland there] are other demands”. But “any form of autonomy for the Protestants” is excluded because “insofar as they are a ‘community’ they identify themselves through their imperialism.” Any stress on “‘democratic’ solutions” only “softens the approach to the liberation struggle.”

For Matgamna, Richardson was substituting an analysis of the facts for “satisfying words which mirror his emotions and serve to seal him off from the real problems”, an approach which could only reach a correct evaluation of the situation by accident.

Defending the idea of “as much autonomy [for the Protestants] as is compatible with the rights of the majority of the Irish people”, Matgamna demolished Richardson’s claim that it is “pro-imperialism” alone which defines Protestants as a community. As against a moralistic and reductive essentialism, Matgamna described the complex historical determinations of Ulster Protestant identity from the United Irishmen onwards, and their often very conditional loyalty to Britain.

### DEFINED

**“Everything,” he wrote, “that has happened in Northern Ireland over the last 15 years refutes the idea that the Protestants are defined as a community only by ‘pro-imperialism.’ They are pro-British or define themselves simply as British, but that is not necessarily the same thing.**

“And in history they have been ‘pro-British’ and supporters of the British state only on certain conditions... In the last decade the Protestant (mainly working-class) masses have brought down three governments, organised powerful militias, and defeated the British government’s entire strategy for Northern Ireland with a general strike in 1974.”

Richardson attempts to define this separate Protestant identity out of existence but, for Matgamna: “The attitude of the Protestants is the central problem, reflecting as it does the existence of a distinct community. Either the Protestants will be conciliated in some way, or they must be coerced, subjugated, conquered and maybe driven out... Nothing conceivably progressive or ‘anti-imperialist’ could come from such a development. Nothing.”

Permanent revolution was invoked at two other points in the debate.

Martin Collins wrote that “permanent revolution has never been something in the revolutionary cookbook for which the peasantry was the main ingredient, but a means of looking at how to make a revolution in a country where capitalism had thoroughly distorted any ‘natural’ or ‘national’ economic development.” This, he argued, applies to Ireland because it “is not an advanced capitalist country, but one dominated in every aspect of economic and political life by imperialism.”

In an echo of the 1966-7 IWG debate, Clive Bradley responded that the whole frame of reference was scholastic; the “problem of the border is a problem for the working class: its abolition does not constitute a ‘bourgeois revolution’ in any meaningful sense.”

Bradley also detected a strain of accommodation to Third World national developmentalist thinking in Collins’s approach, as if the purpose of permanent revolution was above all the development of the productive forces in a national economy: “Trotsky’s theory had nothing to do with the ‘un-natural’ or (worse) ‘un-national’ character of capitalist development in Russia” but about how the combined and uneven development in Russia created a particular social dynamic that allowed the working-class to take the lead in the bourgeois revolution. The point is not to guarantee national development but along with revolution in other countries... to secure workers’ interests.”

Donal Rayner O’Connor Lysaght, from the Irish section of the “orthodox Trotskyist” Fourth International, argued that denying the validity “the Permanent Revolution” means attempting “to unite on a lasting basis within the borders of the Six County state Catholic and Protestant workers.”

This approach, he argued, had been followed by “[former SDLP labourite] Paddy Devlin, [former Irish Labour minister and anti-republican] Conor Cruise O’Brien, [the Stalino-Unionist] Sinn Féin the Workers Party (formerly Official Sinn Féin), the [ultra-Stalinist pro-loyalist] British and Irish Communist Organisation and, of course, Militant Irish Monthly [now the Socialist Party/Socialist Appeal].”

“Two factors link this motley crew,” wrote Lysaght: “All deny Permanent Revolution’s validity in Ireland and all have moved steadily rightwards in the fourteen years since the

start of the present struggle.”

“The Permanent Revolution”, then, functioned for Lysaght as a sort of guarantee against a rightist deviation. Moreover, any federal arrangement would be a reactionary “insurance policy against the Permanent Revolution” because Protestants, for Lysaght, “are a backward part of the all-Ireland workforce, kept backward by imperialist concessions”, a “labour aristocracy recruited by religion”, possessive of “colon consciousness.”

No democratic programme is required because they “will join us in struggle, they will fight alongside us, but they will join us late and only as a result of a thirty-two county fight.” Lysaght does not say exactly what this struggle is but from his claim that it would be like “1972” and “at times during the H block agitation” it is clear that he means the mobilisation of the Catholic community after Bloody Sunday and around the hunger strikes in 1981.

In other words, the nationalist-republican struggle will pass “uninterruptedly” into a united working-class struggle.

The facts belie this perspective. In 1972, the death-toll in Northern Ireland was 479, reflecting the high degree of sectarian polarisation. It was the highest death toll for any year of the Troubles before and since. In 1981 and 1982, the figures (113 and 110) for deaths would not be reached again during the conflict. For the “orthodox Trotskyist” Mandelites, then, the phoenix of united working-class struggle could rise from the ashes of furious sectarian warfare.

Jim Denham responded that these misconceptions arise from those comrades “who in their (correct) eagerness to solidarise with the nationalist cause, end up forgetting the ABCs of working class politics, and lapsing into petty bourgeois nationalism... There need be no contradiction between being an ‘anti-imperialist supporting the Irish national democratic struggle’, and advocating measures conciliating the Protestant working-class... The only people who see any contradiction are those who have given up any independent working class view of the situation and opted instead for Catholic nationalism plus ‘Trotskyist’ rhetoric.”

Denham also reminded Lysaght that “‘Militant’ do not ‘deny Permanent Revolution’s validity to Ireland’. In fact they proclaim the applicability of this theory to Ireland very loudly and with monotonous regularity... So much for the idea that allegiance to this particular view of the Irish struggle guarantees intransigent anti-imperialism.”

### ULSTER PROTESTANTS

**Lurking behind these positions were wildly differing conception of how to categorise Ulster Protestants.**

Some, like Lysaght, thought the “the Ulster Protestants originated as colons. Their consciousness is still a colon consciousness.” As Martin Thomas wrote in the debate, from this assessment of Protestants as “similar to the European settlers in colonial Algeria... clear conclusions follow. Catholic/Protestant workers’ unity on any mass scale is not just difficult to achieve but utopian.”

This simplification arises from a tendentious method of “reading history backwards in a straight line to identify today’s Protestant community with Cromwell’s soldiers of the 1640s.”

If, asks Thomas, Protestants were simply “colons”, why did Irish republicans such as James Connolly hope “that the pressure of a common exploitation can make enthusiastic rebels out of a Protestant working class, earnest champions of civil and religious liberty out of Catholics, and out of both a united social-democracy.”

It was “because they saw that the Protestants were not a mere clique of exploiters superimposed on the masses of Ireland – that neither Catholic nor Protestant working people could be free unless both could unite in a fight for liberation.”

In his response, Thomas mentions the “two nations” theory; the idea that, broadly speaking, there are separate nations on the island of Ireland – a Catholic-Irish one and a Protestant-British one.

This view was most often associated with the British and Irish Communist Organisation (BICO), Maoists who around 1969 developed the line that there were two nations in Ireland, with the Protestant nation the more progressive. This led them to actively support the reactionary Ulster Workers’ Council strike in 1974, which brought down the tentative power-sharing government in Northern Ireland.

However, the “anti-imperialists” held a mirror-image position, with the value judgements reversed. Thomas retorted that for those who saw the Protestants as colons, “Ireland, in short, is after all ‘two nations’ – only one of these, the Protestant nation, is a bad nation.”

In the 1983 debate Jo Quigley was accused by Matgamna of advocating a BICO-style position on “two nations.” Answer-

ing Alistair Todd’s assertion that “the Protestant working class can have nothing in common with the Catholic working class” because of the former’s material and national privileges, Quigley replied that: “The class unity of Protestant and Catholic workers against capitalism can indeed flourish...but only if Protestant sense of cultural separateness from the Catholic Irish nation is respected. Conversely, as long as socialists endorse the ‘irredentist’ republican campaign to subjugate into a nation they feel no part of, no working class unity will ever be possible.”

Matgamna, himself accused of being a “two nationalist”, responded that this view of the situation was “perverse”.

“Irredentism” is “the belief that a state should include all those citizens of other states who speak ‘its own’ language and belong to ‘its’ ethnic group.” It is often associated with national chauvinism and expansionism, such as Germany’s annexation of Austria in 1938. This is not what is behind the conflict in Ireland.

In reality, the Republic of Ireland’s “irredentist” claim on the North was not serious. Indeed, successive Irish governments worked with the British to maintain the border.

The real root of the conflict was the fact that the form of partition was an undemocratic imposition on Ireland, which trapped an Irish majority in the border areas of the Six Counties. So far as it was linked to the Protestants feeling “threatened”, the “threat that the Six County majority have felt has been the threat of the Northern Ireland minority, the main victims of partition.”

### OPPRESSED

**This means, argued Matgamna: “Any criticism of elements of Catholic chauvinism in the Republican movement...must be put in that context, or you wind up with a back-to-front view of the world, unable to distinguish between the oppressed and their oppressors.”**

Though the Republicans superimposed their militarist agenda on top of the Catholic revolt of the 1960s, the “revolt of the Six County Catholics was a just and necessary revolt against the intolerable injustice of partition, and of its intolerable consequences for the Northern Catholics.”

Politically, “the ‘two-nationist’ position is...inextricably linked with the defence of the untenable and unjust status quo” and works against the “claim of the majority of the Irish people to self-determination.”

And what are the characteristics of a nation? “For Marxists a nation is a social complex embodying a common history, language, culture, economy and territory” whereas Northern Ireland Protestants are “interlaced and intertwined in the same territory with the Catholic community in Northern Ireland.” Instead, they are a “‘distinct community’...a social formation with some of the features of a nation which has failed to develop fully into one, and for which autonomy of development has not been possible because it is enmeshed with another community, and with Britain.”

Even if they were a nation, the Six Counties would not be its “natural and proper territorial expression”, and the only way that it would be lies on the other side of a civil war and forced population transfers.

Matgamna’s approach still rings true today, though the sectarian war has been replaced by a sectarian peace and intricate political structures to manage it. “Concern for the Protestants must be integrated with the unresolved issue of national rights; concern for the Northern Ireland Catholics and Irish national independence must integrate with awareness what the Protestants are and what the ‘Protestant problem’ is; concern for class unity must integrate with the building of a socialist movement concerned also for the just struggle of the Catholics; concern for Irish national independence against Britain must integrate with a proper and consistently democratic concern for the relations between different sections of the Irish people.”

**Part of building such a socialist movement is understanding this history, including these debates. Most important is doing what so many Trotskyists have resisted doing regarding Ireland – thinking critically about how to apply these analyses to the situation in Ireland today.**

**Provos, Protestants and working class politics: a dialogue**

**By Sean Matgamna**

**Download as a pdf, mobi or epub from [bit.ly/pp-wcp](http://bit.ly/pp-wcp)**



## Teachers strike over pay blockage

By Gemma Short

**Teachers at Merrill Academy, Derbyshire, have been on strike for six days through January in a dispute over unattainable appraisal targets and denial of pay progression.**

Both teaching unions, the NUT and the NASUWT, are taking part in the strike and have been staging daily picket lines. However picket lines were suspended on January 29 after drivers, believed to be a non-striking members of staff, drove aggressively at pickets over several days, leading to a striker

and a student being hit by a car.

School management have aggressively attacked the unions in the local press, and have run previously unplanned trips for students as a way to break the strike.

**The NUT has announced that it will strike again next week and after the half-term holiday and will be holding an information meeting for parents and members of the community on Thursday 5 February.**

• Messages of support to: [wayne.mcnaught@ntlworld.com](mailto:wayne.mcnaught@ntlworld.com)



## Sacked because she was pregnant

By Charlotte Zalens

**Nuvia Erazo Farias, an outsourced cleaner at the University of London, is taking cleaning contractor Cofely to an employment tribunal on allegations of maternity discrimination.**

Nuvia worked as a cleaner at Garden Halls student residence until June last year when the halls shut for refurbishments. Like many of her colleagues Nuvia applied for other vacancies within the University to avoid redundancy. However Nuvia, who was six months pregnant at the time, was not given an invitation letter or advance warning for her interview, unlike other workers.

Nuvia was not given an interview conducted with two managers as per standard protocol. Instead the one manager present, Sharon Bracey, the Cleaning Services Manager, who dou-

bles as Unison rep, would not talk about work but only of maternity pay and redundancy because of Nuvia's "condition". Nuvia was then made redundant.

After a series of legal threats, Cofely backtracked and gave Nuvia and permanent job. However in the interim Nuvia went through a period of extreme stress, culminating in her hospitalisation, as she feared she would no longer have a source of income after her maternity leave.

A public hearing for the tribunal will begin on 3 February and continue on 4, 5, 6, and 9 February at Victory House, 30-34 Kingsway, Holborn.

**The IWGB, Nuvia's union, are asking for solidarity at the hearing and for letters to be sent to the University of London Vice-Chancellor.**

• Model letter: [bit.ly/Nuvia-letter](http://bit.ly/Nuvia-letter)

# Health deal: vote no!

By a Healthworker

**Strikes by health unions due to happen on 29 January and 25 February were called off on Tuesday 27 following a new offer from the government.**

The unions will consult members over the next few weeks. Unison and Unite have stated strikes will be relaunched on March 13 if the offer is rejected.

The dispute was initiated by the failure of the government to implement the NHS pay review body recommendation of 1% for 2014/15. The offer for that year remains exactly the same. A pay freeze for the majority, 1% bonus (unconsolidated — i.e. disappears on 31 March) for those on the top of their pay band. No change for most.

Far from making up for this year's pay freeze, the offer for 2015/16 is 1%, excluding those on the top band, above 8b, and an additional £200 for bands 1 and 2 (£4/week before tax). The lowest point on band 1

will be abolished.

This is essentially an offer of 1% over two years for most health workers and a slightly bigger increase for those on the lowest pay.

For health workers who have suffered years of frozen pay, this offer is derisory. It will leave those on the top of their bands with even less in their pay packets than when we started the action. In real terms the only people that will take home a penny more are on the lowest two pay points. Everyone else gets a pay cut.

Those workers on the lowest pay band need a Living Wage in the health service, not a deal that retains most of band 1, trapping the lowest paid on poverty pay.

In reality many of these low paid jobs are outsourced and are not even covered by the offer.

The offer is cost neutral to the government. The slight increases will be funded by the pay freeze for those on 8c and above and an increment freeze for all above band 7. Whilst no one will



be that upset about senior management taking a hit, this sets a worrying precedent of freezing increments.

The deal includes an agreement to reform Agenda for Change. For the unions to enter into such negotiations with a government who have explicitly said they support regional pay, believe that increments are unaffordable, and have already fired the first bullet in the attack on unsocial hours payments on the back of a defeat, will be a disaster.

With the background of an imminent general election, and with overwhelming support from the public for an NHS facing crisis, we need to campaign hard against this deal.

Realistically the way to get a no vote will be with high profile rejection campaigns run by branches.

**Within these campaigns we need to be talking about the sort of action we want relaunched on March 13 and how we can rebuild the unions to fight against future attacks.**

## Tube drivers ballot for strikes

By Ollie Moore

**Tube Union RMT is balloting its driver members on London Underground for strikes against the unjust sacking of driver Alex McGuigan.**

Alex failed a breathalyser test. According to London Underground's Drug and Alcohol Policy, his urine sample should then also have been tested for alcohol.



However, it was only tested for drugs. Medical experts have also attested that breathalyser tests can produce false positives because of medical conditions like diabetes, from which Alex suffers.

LU bosses have maintained a constant campaign of lies and distortions in response to the union, with Transport for London commissioner Peter Hendy being forced to apologise

after lying on live radio that Alex had been "drinking at work".

Union activists say the issue at the heart of the dispute is the company's abuse of procedure; if LU gets away with sacking Alex on the basis of an obvious disregard for their own agreed procedures, other workers could also face unjust sackings.

**The ballot closes on 10 February.**

## M25 workers strike

By Charlotte Zalens

**Maintenance and incident support workers on the M25 will strike on Monday 16 February.**

The employer, Connect Plus Services, is composed of three major contractors, Balfour Beatty, Atkins and Egis. The Unite union is concerned that workers are on contracts with different conditions depending on the contractor.

Some workers have no sick pay for the first three days of illness, and wage discrepancies exist.

The average wage across

the workforce at present is £25,000. In October 2014, Balfour Beatty announced that its new CEO Leo Quinn would be paid a basic wage of £800,000, with pension contributions and bonuses on top of that, meaning that he earns at least 32 times more than the average CPS worker.

Unite is demanding a £30,000 basic wage, day one sick pay, and full recognition of the union by the employer.

**Unite has announced it will take one 24 hour strike per week, with a work to rule in between.**

## National Gallery strike

By Peggy Carter

**PCS union members at the National Gallery began a five-day strike on Tuesday 3 February.**

Gallery bosses last year announced plans to outsource almost all staff, including visitor support staff. In what appears to be a trial run of this plan, private security firm CIS have been given one whole wing of the museum to run until the end of this year, without any competitive tender or consultation.

**Union members argue that the privatisation of**



**visitor services will mean a worsening of terms and conditions for staff, and increasing job insecurity.**

• Sign the petition against the privatisation: [bit.ly/Gallery-petition](http://bit.ly/Gallery-petition)





## London bus drivers strike for fair pay

By Gemma Short

**London bus drivers will strike again for 24 hours on Thursday 5 February in their dispute to level-up pay between bus companies.**

Two further 24 hour strikes have been announced for Friday 13 February and Monday 16 February.

There are 80 different pay scales for drivers in London, across 18 different companies. They vary based on the company and the year that a driver started.

As of 2015, new drivers with Arriva — the lowest payer for starter drivers — get £9.69 an hour. The previ-

ous starting rate with Arriva, before 2015, was £9.30 an hour. After eight years, a driver is on £12.89 an hour.

For Stagecoach drivers — the highest payer for starter drivers — the rate is £11.46. After two years, they reach the top rate of £15.63 an hour.

Last year the capital's bus operators made a combined profit of £171.1 million, with directors' pay totalling at least £7.24 million a year. Competition for contracts between private companies is creating a race to the bottom for bus drivers' pay and conditions, whilst creaming off profits from a public service for company bosses.

On the first strike day on Tuesday 13 January picket

lines on bus garages were big and lively. At many garages no or very few buses moved. However, as strikes continue, management will try harder to find ways to move buses. Pickets should find ways to prevent buses being moved.

On 13 January a survey of members of the public showed that over two thirds supported the campaign to end pay disparity.

**Public political campaigning should be combined with industrial action to force bus companies and TfL to the negotiating table.**

• Visit a picket line near you: [bit.ly/bus-depots](http://bit.ly/bus-depots)



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